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Abstract:

In recent years there have been several attempts to bring more "realism" to the war movie genre. One of the most successful modern adaptations was that of HBO's critically acclaimed "Band of Brothers" based on the book by historian Stephen Ambrose. When the follow-up series "The Pacific" came out, it was not as well received. Viewers had compared it too much to Band of Brothers, while some viewers were uncomfortable with the depictions of US Marines as brutal in the show. This paper looks at the series, how it was received, how some of the criticisms came about, and what those involved in the actual fighting thought of the Hollywood version. Consideration must also be given in regards of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, which also affected the response of the series.

Biography

Cord A. Scott has a Doctorate in American History from Loyola University Chicago and currently serves as a Traveling Collegiate Faculty for the UMUC-Asia. He is the author of *Comics and Conflict: Patriotism and Propaganda from World War II through Operation Iraqi Freedom,* published by the US Naval Institute Press. He has written for several encyclopedias, academic journals such as *the International Journal of Comic Art, the Journal of Popular Culture, the Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society*, and in several books on aspects of cultural history.

The Convolution of History: the Argument of the Pacific

Cord A. Scott

I want to create a series that serves as classes (which) would be conducted not at the school blackboard but right in the family parlor. – Henry Soloman on his series Victory at Sea, which served as a model for The Pacific.

Movies, like their television counterparts, serve to not only educate but inform the populous of the historical events of the past. As was noted in John Bodner's book *History on Film, Film on History*, historical films can serve not only as a way to preserve the past, but if the images and story are compelling enough, the history takes on its own life. Events can be more "real" in a visual form, than the books ever can. Most recently, Home Box Office (HBO) has delved into this field, and has created several mini-series, which attempt to honor the actions of World War II combatants. What started with the mini-series *Band of Brothers* (HBO, 2001-2002), was continued on with the series which told of the struggles endured by the US Marines in the Pacific Theatre, entitled *The Pacific* (HBO, 2010).

This series was an attempt from the powerhouse producers Steven Spielberg and Tom Hanks to not merely show the conflict that has been a part of many shows over the years, but also attempt to break the myth of the "good war" in which combatants acted within rules of war. *The Pacific* was an attempt to show the violence and anguish that the Marines faced while on islands that no one had ever heard of, fighting not only a fanatical enemy, but the very terrain and elements as well. But while the series attempted to break the myth of an honorable and sterile war (especially in the era of drone strikes, enemy combatants, and the two longest wars in American history with little truly understood as to goals achieved), the series resonated with some as a way of describing the parallels with combat in the 21st century. This paper looks at the series, the depictions of violence that seemed excessive by some viewers who have their own

"perception" of the war and actions of American combatants, and the support material, which was an attempt to bring information and education to a visual medium.

When the *Pacific* series was under development, the US was in the middle of both the Afghanistan and Iraq wars. This series was meant to show the sacrifices of US servicemen in the Pacific as well as give people a better sense of the overall brutality of the Second World War, as well as war in general. It was also easy to draw comparisons between events, which occurred in the series, and the events that were being reported on during the time that the series aired, as many Americans saw the Taliban, or the Iraqi enemies as carrying out acts of terror against US combatants as well as civilians.

The budget and production values for *The Pacific* were substantial by Hollywood standards. The production companies included DreamWorks SKG (Spielberg's company), Dreamtone, and HBO productions. The estimated cost of the mini-series was $120 million dollars, which rivals any mainstream movie currently produced. As with *Band of Brothers*, several directors were tasked with specific episodes. Those directors on *the Pacific* included Tim Van Patten (who directed episodes 1, 7, and 9), David Nutter (episodes 2 and 8), Jeremy Podeswa (episodes 3, 8 and 10), Graham Yost (episode 4) Carl Franklin (episode 5) and Tony To (episode 6).

The Pacific was based on several books, unlike the single book of Stephen Ambrose for the mini-series *Band of Brothers*. These books were quite divergent in their attitudes toward the war. Robert Leckie's *Helmet for My Pillow* covered the early part of the war; Eugene Sledge's memoir *With the Old Breed* covered the later part of the fighting in 1944 and 1945; Chuck Tatum's *Red Blood Black Sand* focused on the fighting on Iwo Jima where John Basilone was killed. Another manuscript that became a link of the series was Sidney Phillip's memoirs *You'll*

be Sor-ree!!: A Guadalcanal Marine Remembers the Pacific War. Phillips was recognized as the connecting character that linked the main characters in the TV mini-series during the three years that the show encompasses.[1] To coincide with the television mini-series, R.V. Burgin, who was featured in the later episodes of the series, published his memoirs *Islands of the Damned*. Finally, a companion piece was *The Pacific* written by Hugh Ambrose, Stephen's son.[2] While the last book was meant to be an additional work to the television show, it was often compared to, and misinterpreted as, the book on which the series was based. As opposed to the companion book, the former books were all memoirs of combat rather than a strategic overview of the Pacific Theatre of war. While showing the reality of combat on the marines, the series also looked at the racism that was prevalent at the time of the war, and how a demonization of the enemy was commonplace.

Given that the series was produced by Home Box Office, it was able to budget effects and writers to make a high budget series in a short, prime time setting. Given the fact that they have to rely on subscriptions, the need for interest in the series meant that they had to craft something that would retain audiences, and to attain even more interest for residuals, the producers relied on what Grey referred to as overflow: the additional materials needed to keep viewers interesting in the story. However, excess information, be it in books or the like, can be vexing to continuity, as well as comprehension of the viewer. This confusion seemed to occur at least occasionally, for viewers of the show.[3] The series also renewed criticisms that Hollywood dramatizes the actions of the typical hero (white, middle class male) while ignoring the actions of anyone not of that type.[4] The Marines did experience break downs, suffer debilitating maladies, and looked not like the Hollywood ideal of the soldier, but more like combatants with a lack of basic food supplies.[5]

The series was criticized for the brutal acts of desecration of enemy troops. While Americans see this as shocking and un-American, and said as much on the comment boards on HBO, the reality was noted in source books, particularly Sledge's memoir. Racism permeated many of the aspects of the Pacific war, as John Dower noted in *War without Mercy* and the producers reiterated in the extra features - disc six of the box set.[6] This made the series difficult for some Americans to watch while others considered it an appropriate homage, complete with all the aspects of war.

The Attitudes toward the Pacific War by Americans

One of the most significant aspects of memory and remembrance of World War II is the difference between the two main theaters of war. While the Nazi menace was considered the more dangerous, and was given top priority by the Roosevelt administration, the war with the Japanese empire was far more brutal. There were a myriad of reasons as to why. First and foremost was the racial aspect. The Germans had an appearance that made them "like us" as in white Americans. Some Americans were a generation or two removed from Germany and so there was a connection to the old country. While the Nazis might be despicable, the Germans conducted warfare with a semblance of rules while fighting the Western Allies, while conducting a brutal, war of no limits with the Soviets.[7]

The Japanese however were depicted by the US Government as well as the popular media in the U.S. as barbarians from the outset of the war.[8] The historical facts of Nanjing in 1937, in which the Imperial Army brutalized the population of Nanjing China in an orgy of violence, as well as the brutality towards anyone who did not fight in the ways of a warrior (known in the Japanese as Bushido) were not worthy of honorable treatment from true warriors. The Allied troops who surrendered to the Japanese were not offered any honor. Because the war in the

Pacific was so markedly different than that of Europe, some people who watched *the Pacific* were shocked to see American Marines committing acts of violence that might now be seen as ghoulish or uncivilized such as the taking of gold teeth from dead Japanese soldiers, or the use of skulls to decorate American camps (such as the Japanese skull and the sign reminding US Marines to take their Atribine to counter malaria in the series, which was based on actual pictures). The taking of souvenirs and to a lesser extent, the desecration of bodies occurred on both sides during the war, as was mentioned in books from Dower to Sledge.

This sort of behavior was not easily accepted by the average American viewer, who looked at, and still looks, upon American servicemen as doing the right thing, and at the same time WWII veterans being held to a higher standard than current troops. Neither of these opinions is necessarily right or wrong. However it must be acknowledged that combat is brutal and violence is common. Racism occurred throughout the United States during the war, and combined with the perceptions of Japanese-Americans being interned for their perceived "loyalties" to Japan – often misplaced – attitudes towards the enemy were strong, stereotypical and often wrong.

Many who watched the *Pacific* expected the series to be a counterpart to *Band of Brothers* which in some ways it was. However, the series had some distinct differences. The extremes of jungle fighting made attrition common and many marines left the theatre of combat after time so there was no unit cohesion. The First Marine Division was the focal point of *the Pacific*. This eliminated a considerable amount of the battles in the Pacific and more importantly, did not show the contributions of the Army, Navy, Air Corps, or Coast Guard.

Creation of *The Pacific* Mini-series

The origins of *The Pacific* mini-series go back to two specific TV series in the 1950s. The first series that was used as a model was *Crusade in the Pacific* (Time, 1951). This 24-part series was done in a typical documentary fashion of the era. Using newsreel footage, as well as maps, the narrator explains the specific battle or time frame for the episode and how it influenced the overall war; *Crusade in the Pacific* focuses on strategic issues: troop movement, battle plans, fighting conditions, and the strategic outcome of the battle. The use of the maps in this original series influenced and inspired the producers of the Pacific, even to the point of using an Imperial Japanese battle flag to illustrate the areas of control. The other direct aspect was the diagram that showed the tunnel system on Peleliu from the episode "Palau" and how that was used as a direct scene-by-scene shot by the producers of *The Pacific* in the historical section for their episode on the Peleliu hills – episode six, "Peleliu Hills".[9]

The other influence was *Victory at Sea,* which first aired in 1952 on NBC. This 26-part documentary series was meant to show how extensively the US worked to confront enemies during World War II and how by working together the Allied forces were able to defeat the Axis nations. However, *Victory at Sea* was produced more like propaganda, similar to Frank Capra's *Why We Fight*. Its "top-down" history did not deal with the memories of the average foot soldier or the minutiae of the battles.

What was more telling was that the viewers expected the show to be "historically" accurate, more akin to a documentary rather than an entertainment/informative based series. The factual basis was important, but many viewers expected the stories to be exact, which they were not. Often issues were merged to create a better flow for the storyline, and the events attributed to characters in the show.

The last disc of the series offered historical background and insight into the ideas that the directors and producers were trying to achieve. One director, Tim Van Patten did note that they did a lot of historical research to find the proper look of the actors and the shots of the battles. The directors were quite aware that there would be some sort of historical comparison, especially by those who were there. As with any television series, even documentaries, there is a constant critique as to what is included, excluded, and how it is edited. No matter what is presented, there will still be some sort of human predilection towards events and historical presentation.[10]

The series, the "fixes" and Reception of *The Pacific*

At the time of the release of the mini-series, Hugh Ambrose wrote the official companion piece for the series, entitled *The Pacific*. Ambrose wrote in the introduction that this book had been initially meant as a joint project between him and his father. Later, the book was continued but the pressure to finish the project both from its massive scope as well as its deadline for additional marketing made any mistakes that much more noticeable. Ambrose made two key points in the book: first it was not meant to be a complete overview since there were so many stories that couldn't be told in the book. The second was that it was not meant to be a follow-along book, like *Band of Brothers* or the other HBO combat mini-series based on the Marines, *Generation Kill*. While both of those series followed the respective books well, the Pacific book was meant to tell augmentative stories to tie it all together. The book focused on some of the characters from the series (Sid Phillips was the key link to all of this and his book had not yet been widely distributed), but primarily focused on two officers: one Navy, pilot Vernon "Mike" Micheel, and USMC Lieutenant Austin "Shifty" Shofner.

The speculation from many viewers/commenters to the boards was that if the officers had been noted in the series the show might have had more impact with them. Understandably, the

story of Shifty Shofner was one that was compelling: stationed in the Philippines at the start of the war, a POW for a year, then a guerilla fighter for six months more. He was in charge of the unit (3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment) in which Eugene Sledge fought during Peleliu, and fought there, then went back to the Philippines, then on to Okinawa. His combat record might have augmented the series well.

In all, the book was still a considerable attempt to focus the myriad of stories into one cohesive format, as well as fill in what seemed to be gaps in the mini-series. This idea of telling individual stories rather than the "big picture" of the overall timeline of the war, or of the generals and admirals who make the strategic decisions, is one that has become more prominent in recent years. Unlike *Victory at Sea*, the voices of the individual marine, soldier and sailor were heard in the Pacific but in a more condensed role. The book that Ambrose wrote had a considerable void to fill. Many felt that Hugh was not the historian or storyteller that his father was, while others felt that the book was slapdash, and edited poorly, which led to problems. However the book, when taken in context of the series, did what it was supposed to: tie in the stories presented in the mini-series, to that of officers who saw a different part of the war, and leave the strategic role to other more academic tomes.

Band of Brothers was countered by some historians who felt that the senior Ambrose was sloppy in his work. Some of the characters in that series who died were later noted as alive – Albert Blythe was an example. Again, the concept of documentary versus historical drama is blurred. In this age of instant access and sweeping television, the two concepts are often blurred and occasionally to the detriment of both the producer and the viewer.

Themes of sex, violence and audience reception

Complaints of the series were often vented on message boards for HBO as well as other sites on the internet. There are several reasons for this: One is that the Pacific was compiled from three different memoirs as was noted earlier. Another factor was that the series was told from a larger body of combatants. For *Band of Brothers*, the series focused on a company of men (roughly 230, depending on units) and their replacements. The viewer of the series watched how they trained, fought and depended on each other throughout the war in Europe. Again this was an entirely different aspect of the perception of the theatres. For Europe, men were kept in the same unit for the duration unless wounded. People reading of the fighting could easily find places in Europe noted in the newspaper articles.

For both *The Pacific*, like the actual campaign of WWII, the islands were often unknown, hard to find on maps, and the maps did not show the terrain and weather conditions that American combatants went through. The *Pacific* series dealt with enlisted men (not officers readily identified like Winters, Nixon or Spears) from the first Marine Division which had a nominal strength of 16,000 members. Because the three main characters in *the Pacific* came from different regiments (4,000 strength average in a Regiment), there is far less continuity. Considering the physically and geographically diverse areas, intense battles and lack of unit cohesion, the writers did admirably with finding commonalities, and the writers and producers did try to give an overview as well as an intimate look at small unit warfare in the Pacific theatre. The link to this was Sid Phillips, who served with Leckie at Guadalcanal and Cape Gloucester, and was friends with Sledge, who fought later on in the same division, but at Peleliu and Okinawa.

Complaints on the message boards came from different areas as well. In addition to the complaints about not understanding characters, others complained about the pacing, either expecting constant actions like *Band of Brothers*, or the difficulty of watching the night battles sequences. Given the terrain and conditions, it would have been less likely to see a lot of "typical war movie" battle sequences in urban or farm land areas where enemies could be easily seen (or filmed for that matter) and engaged.

An area of complaint in the series involved the "gratuitous" sex and to a lesser extent, gratuitously brutal – mutilation of enemy body - violence involved in the series. If one reads any Marine memoir, the desire for sex when NOT in combat is extensive. Leckie made considerable mention of this in his book, as did Phillips. The idea of Americans being squeamish on sex, while violence is perfectly all right, is one that has also been mentioned in length in psychology books. [11]

The Marines considered the issue of sex to be of such significance that a segment on the necessity of condom usage was part of a restricted comic book published by the Marines, entitled *Tokyo Straight Ahead*. The desire for sex, especially for young men who were virile, and in harm's way, possessed many.[12] The idea that a revered generation would think thoughts attributed to a more modern generation is sometimes difficult for viewers to take.

The series was derided for these depictions of sex, especially in episodes "Melbourne" and "Basilone". The reality was that western women were not seen often in the Pacific theatre, and unlike the possibility of "fraternization" with local women which was possible in Europe, any female US personnel were under constant guard against some sort of sexual assault from male personnel. Schrijvers described the conditions on one particular island, where the women's quarters were surrounded by concertina wire, and when even out on dates, their male escorts

carried a sidearm.[13] In the series, Gene Sledge made two comments on women in this regard. One that they did not need nor should they be in a combat zone – after alighting from a ship back to Pavuvu in October 1944, the other when he was chatting with his brother about the lack of women and sex in the Pacific in the last episode "Home" where he said the same thing even the US Army had noted in their synopsis of the Pacific War.[14]

The concept of sex and romance is further clouded when one looks at the idea of sex and military personnel. In *Band of Brothers* there was a sex scene but it was not for a necessary development of characters. However in *the Pacific*, the sex was part of a wider pattern showing emotional connection, both with the characters and their fears and desires as citizen soldiers, as well as combatants that wish to feel some sort of emotional connection to something other than killing. This idea made the episodes seem slow, but at the same time were noted in several of the primary sources. In fact, in Leckie's book, he notes that he became more interested in what he referred to as "the hunt" for willing female partners, rather than romance as he was depicted in the series.

Desecration of enemy bodies or the shooting of civilians was also one that came across in the message boards. One commenter on an internet board was disturbed by a scene in which a marine idly dropped rocks into the skull pan of a Japanese soldier (Episode seven – Peleliu Hills), while another noted that it was gratuitous and unrealistic for Marines to pry out gold teeth from Japanese soldiers. The events in question were taken from Sledge's book and have been noted in several different sources, such as Schrijvers, Leckie, Dower and Stephen Ambrose. Even in *Band of Brothers*, there was a certain amount of souvenir taking amongst American soldiers. The idea of a morality in war, from Thermopylae to now is a myth.

For some modern combatants, the episodes contained elements that seemed familiar to modern combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. In one scene from the episode on the Okinawa campaign, the Japanese use civilians as human shields, and draw on American compassion. One woman tries to hand off her child to a marine. When her jacket opens the viewer sees she has explosives strapped to her chest. She exploded killing or wounding all around her. The Marines later commented that it was barbaric that their enemy would use such horrific tactics. This sort of combat was common in Iraq and Afghanistan, where jihadis, disguised as civilians, walked into US lines and detonated explosives. Whether they were lured, coerced or did it voluntarily is a matter of opinion, but the results were the same. The scenario of civilians and combatants dying on the battlefield was one that took people away from the Hollywood version of a "clean war" and put people in the uncomfortable aspect of seeing civilians die as they either were in the way, or served a purpose against a determined enemy.

Combat, racism and the compression of time.

Tied into this complaint of the series was that the battles were often difficult to understand. Given the first two episodes which dealt with the battle of Guadalcanal, viewers were not given labels to determine what major battle they were watching. Some depictions like the location of Alligator Creek were noted but it was not the norm and when combined with a lack of the battle sequence or the lack of location, the significance of the battle was often undercut. The book was to offer a way to connect the events but did not succeed.

When one hears of World War II veterans and the treatment of enemy soldiers in what might be considered war crimes, WWII is not invoked, but Vietnam is. The fact that racism existed during WWII, and when combined with the stereotypes of the Japanese (and the Japanese stereotypes of Americans) the war in the Pacific was one where atrocities did in fact occur with

frequency. The depiction of the Japanese as having buck teeth, Coke bottle glasses, and a cartoonish like demeanor, was countered in the series. In the scene where Chuck Tatum and members of C Company, 1st Btn, 27th Rgt, Fifth Marine Division were commenting on their desire to "slap a Jap" Gunny Sergeant Basilone addresses the men to say that whatever they may think through Hollywood or pop culture depictions of Japanese soldiers, the real Japanese soldier deserved respect as a crafty, battle tested soldier who was willing to die for his emperor. The Marines were told to never underestimate the enemy, nor should they be given a break. But it was also not going to be some easy battle against an enemy that was like a caricature. Tatum himself noted in his book that Basilone did not utter this speech, but another sergeant did. [15]

Another comment made by viewers, as well as many who served in these support units from World War II is that many units or groups are ignored in the story lines or that the cast is not diverse enough. Both of these issues are important to note since it is often forgotten that the US Armed Services were segregated at that time. While there were important contributions, the stories often noted from that time are of units that saw extensive combat and the majority of those units in the segregated US military of World War II where white. This argument was one that Spike Lee noted when *Flags of Our Fathers* came out: the fact that 900 African Americans fought as well but were not depicted in the movie.[16] Since the movie was centered on the men who raised the flag, the inclusion of everyone was not possible. Neither would the inclusion of specific ships, or aircraft units or Army units. Hollywood still needs to sell the most appealing story and this was why even Spielberg would be hard pressed to make a movie that centered on his father's service in the military: flying "the Hump" with the China, India, Burma units of the US Air Corps. They did serve a vital part of the war, but it was not glamorous.

This pre-conceived notion that all who served in World War II were combat veterans has also been re-evaluated. Many service personnel did not serve in combat units but were instead in some form of support. They did not see combat but were just as responsible for the war effort by making the machinery run, arming and repairing weaponry, keeping combatants fed, and so on. These stories, while important, often do not excite Hollywood movie makers, nor do they resonate with viewers. So in this regard the films, even when done, still convey what both the creators and viewers want: action. The reality is often different, and the criticisms perhaps unwarranted.

PTSD and the concept of rehabilitation/weakness

One of the most mistaken aspects of World War II in commemoration is that of Post-Traumatic Stress as it affected the combatants. Movies and documentaries from the World War II era or early Cold War often avoided such issues or demonstrated them in limited form. Both *Band of Brothers* and *the Pacific* took the concept of post-traumatic stress and visually demonstrated events which may have contributed to the malady.

While in *Band of Brothers*, there were issues of combat stress or some sort of mental break (especially during "Bastogne") but on the whole there were far more cases of combat fatigue in the Pacific theatre, specifically the SW Pacific where most of the Island fighting was conducted.[17] Whether it was John Basilone's lamentation for his friend Manny Rodriguez who was killed, or the guilt of not going back to fight, his emotional distress has often been echoed by current recipients of the Medal of Honor.

Leckie directly suffered combat fatigue which led to his hospitalization on Banika, near Pavuvu. This was shown in episode 4, where Leckie noted his breakdown in detail. He also mentioned in the book and the series a fellow marine who strangled a Japanese soldier with his

bare hands and later broke down. Some viewers commented that Leckie was a coward for his constant disobedience to the chain of command and orders (something he readily admitted to in the book) but again this was part of a wider perception of WWII veterans: that they did not suffer from anything like mental issues – that is seen wrongly as a Vietnam War issue. The ironic thing is that both wars had similar situations and combat conditions, and so it is more likely to have happened. The image of the "good war" is that such incidents are more of a modern creation.

The stress of Marines upon seeing civilian casualties was also one that was explored in the series in particular Episode 9 "Okinawa" where the native Okinawans were used as human shields by the Japanese against US movements. The aspect of civilian loss was one that often made coping even more difficult. The use of a female Okinawan who has a bomb strapped to her must have had some sort of impact with veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan, where suicide bombers were common.

The idea of nightmares and post-traumatic stress was also noted with Sledge. While the last episode dealt with his re-acclimation to the US, the reality was that he did not come back to the States until almost 1947, after an additional tour in China. He still had reoccurring nightmares which he mentioned in the book. One viewer said that he "hated Sledge's emo character" but again the events he stressed about in the film were noted in detail in the book.[18]

What is also prevalent in the series, as in many memoirs, is gallows humor. The constant light-heartedness to break the tension was a key part of the series. A scene where a Marine is chased from a cave after trying to defecate led to his impending demise. The Japanese soldier is killed but the others make fun of the marine, who did in fact soil his pants, by saying he looked like he won a sack race.[19]

Overflow and materials to aid understanding

One of the modern aspects of *the Pacific* as compared to *Victory at Sea* or *Crusade in the Pacific* is that the modern series also can offer on-line information through the internet. HBO did a wonderful job constructing a webpage to offer different material. One section was the Battle map section which offered interactive maps of the major battles shown by specific episode. The maps were detailed, and showed specific battles and layouts of units during the battle, where certain characters were located during the attacks, as well as animated aspects of aerial attacks and ship movements.

The second section that was available was the "Interact with History" section. This allowed the viewer to read more about the facts that no series regardless of how extensive could ever get to discuss. One example of this was in the first episode when a Marine lieutenant was shown with a Riesling sub-machine gun. Many of these weapons proved to be inadequate in the jungle, but the producers made it a point to show these weapons along with the M1903 Springfield rifles as opposed to the M-1 Garand rifles which were used by the US Army. The *Victory at Sea* episode on Guadalcanal did not use accurate footage of the battle and often Marines were shown with the Garand rifles.

The final section was the "Witness the Conflict" section. This section was where people on the website could watch the episodes. The interaction of the website, combined with the comment boards, the historical markers and maps, and the various stories of tribute to those who fought there made, and continue to make, for an interactive process that allows the series to morph and change with the time. While the series was awarded two Emmys for the series,

whereas *Band of Brothers* won seven, the viewership and comments on the internet as well as the sales of the series, continue to this day.

Conclusions

While the series *the Pacific* had its detractors, it did garner considerable viewership for HBO. As with any series, especially one that is done primarily for entertainment, and one that uses several books as source material, the flow of scenery and changes often made for critiques. For many viewers, *Band of Brothers* serves as a benchmark of this type of mini-series on several levels. One reason for this is the familiarity of the battles and the idea of the "good war" that of combatants who know what they are fighting for, and fighting within the seeming grounds of respect for their enemy as a human. For the Pacific veterans, the war could not have been any more different from that in Europe. In a scene in the last episode "Home", Eugene discusses his war versus that of his older brother Ed, who fought in Europe. When it was revealed that Eugene didn't have the opportunity to fraternize with women or enjoy any of the other aspects of life in the European theatre, his brother looked at him with a look of both shock and sadness. The idea of the war not being familiar with any expectations (or for that matter too many expectations as Eugene had mentioned prior to his first battle), came as a surprise.

For viewers of *The Pacific*, the disappointment of expectations was varied, understandable to an extent, but not entirely accurate. Comment posters to the board noted that one should watch the series a couple of times and it becomes much stronger, when the books, the information and the series all coincide. At the same time, whenever HBO or some other large production company authorizes a series to visually tell of a unit of World War II, others want their due, whether it's the Navy, the Seabees, or the Army paratroopers in the Philippines.

There should be a preservation of history, and the documentaries and even historical dramas serve a role, but it must be augmented by other sources to take in the events so that one can determine what is real and what appears contrived of "Hollywood." However, in today's instant world it often simply is what is here and now, and what fits in our collective ideas of what it should be. Anything else is a disappointment.

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Video

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[10] The author served as a historical consultant for a National Geographic Special *Inside World War II*. One of the complaints made by viewers was that the colors were wrong for the Nazi aircraft, and that the series was not deep enough. The producers explained to the author during review that the series was meant for younger audiences that may not be aware of the human element of the war, and that it was a starting point for further discussion. For comments, see http://www.amazon.com/Inside-World-War-II-Various/product-reviews/B00BCMT2EA/ref=cm_cr_dp_qt_hist_two?ie=UTF8&filterBy=addTwoStar&showViewpoints=0

[11] Leckie, 116, and Phillips, 120.

[12] "Dont take a fling if you aint got a thing." In *Tokyo Straight Ahead* (Camp Pendleton CA: Marine Corps Publishing 1945), np.

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[15] Tatum, Chuck. 2012. *Red Blood, Black Sand: Fighting Alongside John Basilone from Boot Camp to Iwo Jima* (New York: Berkely Caliber) 86-87.

[16] Spike Lee and Clint Eastwood commentary http://content.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,1812972,00.html (retrieved March 15, 2015)

[17] Schrijvers, *The GI War against Japan*, 197.

[18] The Straight Dope webpage http://boards.straightdope.com/sdmb/showthread.php?t=585249

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